King County	Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention All Divisions General Policy Manual
	Chapter 1 **Administration and Personnel Management**

1.01.017, **Public Information Officer**		Approved By:	Director Allen Nance
		Effective Date:	October 11, 2022
		Reviewed By:	PRC
		Review Date:	September 20, 2022
Distribution:		Document Code No.	

Purpose

This policy is to establish guidelines for staff tasked with external and internal communications responsibilities including those acting as the DAJD's Public Information Officer (PIO).

Policy

It is the department's policy to respond to public/media inquiries, while also providing proactive external and internal communications. Staff responsible for communications should respond as quickly and completely as possible and should strive to maintain good relations with the news media. Information should flow freely to the public provided such information does not jeopardize the safety and security of staff, inmates/detained youth, the general public, exploit a weakness in facility security, or violate the law.

References

Department Policies: 1.01.012, Release of Information
1.01.015, Media Access to Inmates and Facilities
J-APR-2.012-2021 Relationship with the Media

Definitions

Public Information Officer (PIO): A staff member, designated by the Director, who is tasked with and authorized to make public statements regarding the Department and its operations, staff, detained youths and inmates.

Operations Public Information Officer: A uniformed staff member designated to support and provide backup to the PIO. The Operations PIO will be a DAJD employee with extensive firsthand knowledge of facility operations.

A. General Guidelines

1. All news media representatives requesting comments or interviews from staff shall be given the name and number of the Public Information Officer who will then grant or deny access to staff.
2. Staff will not disseminate information concerning their interpretations of Department policy, investigations, budget or other opinions that could be construed as representing the Department.
3. Staff members who are serving in the role of labor organization representatives may engage in commentary about the Department as part of their duty as a labor representative.
4. Staff members who are serving in the role of labor organization representatives are

prohibited from releasing any information relating to any ongoing investigations without first seeking approval from the PIO or higher authority.

5. Staff are required to report to their immediate supervisor or PIO any contact with the news media in regard to any current or previous investigation or incident.

B. Public Information Officer (PIO)

1. During normal business hours the PIO will attempt to comply with all media requests by notifying the appropriate staff member to supply information, be it a Department Investigator, Major, Commander, Division Director, Deputy Division Director or other staff member.
2. During non-business hours the PIO shall be contacted for all media-related inquiries. If the PIO is unavailable, the Executive Duty Officer (EDO) or Operations PIO designee shall handle the request.
3. The PIO shall inform the Department's Director or Deputy Director of all media-related releases.
4. The PIO shall coordinate all press releases and press conferences with the King County Executive's Office.

C. Operations PIO

1. During their normal shift, the Operations PIO will share responsibility for answering media requests with the PIO.
2. When necessary to draft a response, the Operations PIO will consult appropriate staff to gather information, be it a Department Investigator, Major, Commander, Division Director, Division Deputy Director or other staff member.
3. The Operations PIO shall inform the Department's Director or Deputy Director, as well as the primary PIO, of all media-related responses.

D. Press Conferences

1. Press conferences shall only be conducted with the approval of the Department Director and County Executive's Office.
2. The PIO will contact staff or other knowledgeable persons when additional background information is needed.
3. Agency representatives should dress in appropriate attire and respond to questions in a courteous manner.
4. The PIO shall supply media representatives with appropriate press packets. Packets may include, but are not limited to:
   a. Applicable statistics
   b. Photographs or other visual aids that meet the needs of public safety or law enforcement.
5. The news media shall not be allowed within the secured perimeter unless authorized by the Department Director or designee.
6. All press conferences shall be held in a location designated by the King County Executive's Office or other Department facility as approved by the Director.

E. News Releases

1. News releases shall be released as promptly as circumstances allow in an impartial, courteous and objective manner.
2. The PIO may disseminate information on a daily basis during a major incident as needed.
3. The PIO shall ensure that all reports, documentation, or other information gathered from staff for use in a press release meets the requirements for release and is truthful and

accurate.

4. The PIO may coordinate with the Department's Policies and Procedures section regarding news releases concerning new policies.
5. In situations where more than one agency is involved, the agency having primary jurisdiction will be responsible for coordinating the release of information.
6. Information may be included in a press release in criminal matters:
   a. The accused or arrestee's name and age.
   b. Time, date, and location of booking, relevant charges and arresting agency.
   c. Release date, if relevant.
   d. Dates of confinement or supervision, if the individual is no longer in DAJD custody.
   e. Other relevant details as set forth in 1.01.012, Release of Information, Section A.2.

F. Crisis Situations

1. If the situation encompasses more than just the Department facilities, the King County Executive's Office will handle all news media inquiries with the PIO acting as the Department's liaison.
2. In crisis situations that involve only DAJD and its facilities or staff, the PIO shall handle media inquiries, unless directed otherwise by the Executive's Office.